

Washington, DC - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided \$215 million in competitive funding to improve services specifically designed for Veterans in rural and highly rural communities like those in Mississippi's First Congressional District, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) announced today.

Congressman Childers Announces \$215 Million in Projects for Rural Veterans

May 22, 2009

Washington, DC - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided \$215 million in competitive funding to improve services specifically designed for Veterans in rural and highly rural communities like those in Mississippi's First Congressional District, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) announced today.

"This significant funding will ensure that our veterans throughout North Mississippi have access to the quality health care they have earned and deserve," said Congressman Childers. "As co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus and a member of the Blue Dog Health Care Task Force, addressing the health care challenges facing rural areas is a top priority of mine. The honorable men and women who served to protect our freedoms should have the best care possible, and these funds will help guarantee that they do. I will work with the VA to ensure that these funds are effectively put to use in Mississippi's First Congressional District."

Of the total funding, \$4,189,581 will potentially benefit the veterans networks servicing North Mississippi.

The selection process was competitive and transparent. Veterans Integrated Service

Networks (VISNs), VA's regional health care networks, and Veterans Health Administration Program Offices were allowed to submit up to eight proposed projects each. These proposals were prioritized and then sent to the Office of Rural Health (ORH), where they were evaluated based on, methodology, feasibility and intended impact on rural Veterans.

After careful review, ORH selected 74 programs, many of which were either national in scope or affected multiple states. Program offices validated these proposals to ensure that projects and programs were consistent with the VA mission, strategic direction, program standards, and did not duplicate existing efforts.

The new funding is part of an ambitious VA program to improve access and quality of health care - both physical and mental - for Veterans in geographically rural areas, with an emphasis on the use of the latest technologies, recruitment and retention of a well-educated and trained health care workforce, and collaborations with non-VA rural health community partners.

A pro-gun, pro-life Mississippian, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) represents the First Congressional District in North Mississippi. He is a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and serves on the House Agriculture and Financial Services Committee. Congressman Childers co-chairs the reestablished bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus and was appointed to the bipartisan Second Amendment Task Force. For more information, visit <http://www.childers.house.gov/>

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